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News Release

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Army Corps of Engineers report a crane accident at Spring Valley site

Baltimore – Early today, while installing a special metal structure at the site of the Army's on-going investigation in the Spring Valley neighborhood, a small crane used to lift pieces of the pre-fabricated structure tipped over and damaged a finished portion of the structure. One worker received minor injuries to his arm and was taken to nearby Sibley Hospital for treatment.

Corps officials have begun an investigation of the accident. Workers with the Army's Edgewood Arsenal, Md., were in the process of removing a temporary canvas tent and installing the specially designed vapor containment structure as an added safety measure over a burial pit that straddles two properties on Glenbrook Road. At no time during this incident were workers or local residents at risk from items buried in the pit. The Corps continues its standard practice of monitoring air at the excavation site.

"During our investigation of the Spring Valley neighborhood, the health and safety of the community and workers has always been and will always be our number one priority," said Col. Charles J. Fiala, Jr., commander of the Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District. "As a result of this incident, I've ordered a safety stand down to review onsite procedures."

In May 2001, Corps officials discovered the burial pit while investigating the property for World War I-era military items. Following the discovery of several military ordnance items in the pit, Corps officials, in coordination with the D.C. Department of Health and EPA, Region III, stopped excavation operations three weeks ago until the metal structure could be installed.

To date, several ordnance items, glass bottles and miscellaneous glassware have been safely removed, containerized and transported offsite to be tested. Some of the glass bottles contained chemical warfare material.

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